

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 18, 2011

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 45

Introduced by Senator Corbett

(Coauthors: Senators De León, Pavley, and Runner)

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Beth Gaines, Hall, Huffman, Jeffries,
and Williams)**

May 3, 2011

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 45—Relative to alcoholic beverage control.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 45, as amended, Corbett. Underage alcohol use.

This measure would urge the Governor to make the prevention of underage alcohol use a priority within this state by engaging in a statewide effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking and its consequences.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Recent scientific studies show that alcohol causes
- 2 much more damage to the developing brains of adolescents and
- 3 teenagers than previously thought, and adolescent brains suffer
- 4 much more damage from the abuse of alcohol than adult brains;
- 5 and
- 6 WHEREAS, The adolescent brain is uniquely sensitive to
- 7 alcohol's effects because major changes in brain structure and
- 8 function occur during this developmental period; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Recent research indicates that adolescent substance
- 10 users show abnormalities in their brain functions that are also
- 11 linked to changes in neurocognition over time; and

1 WHEREAS, Abnormalities have been seen in brain structure
2 volume, white matter quality, and activation to cognitive tasks,
3 even in youth with as little as one to two years of heavy drinking
4 and consumption levels of 20 drinks per month, especially if more
5 than four to five drinks are consumed on a single occasion. It is
6 unknown whether these changes are reversible; and

7 WHEREAS, Because of continuous neurological developments
8 in adolescence and young adulthood, increased preferences for
9 risky behavior and novelty seeking emerge, predisposing teenagers
10 to experiment more with drugs and alcohol while being particularly
11 at risk of developing addictive behaviors; and

12 WHEREAS, The neural circuits that release chemicals that link
13 new, adult-like experiences with the motivation to repeat them
14 develop more rapidly during the teenage years than do the
15 mechanisms to control these urges and impulses which depend on
16 exercising reason and judgment at the conscious level, basically
17 the knowledge of right from wrong. As a result, teenagers are not
18 only more likely to feel enticed by drugs and alcohol than older
19 people, but are also more vulnerable to the adverse effects of
20 substance abuse; and

21 WHEREAS, Each year, approximately 5,000 young people
22 under 21 years of age die as a result of underage drinking; including
23 about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 as a result
24 of homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as hundreds from other
25 injuries such as falls, burns, and drownings; and

26 WHEREAS, Drinking continues to be widespread among
27 adolescents, as shown by nationwide surveys as well as studies in
28 smaller populations. According to an annual survey of *U.S. United*
29 *States* youth, three-fourths of 12th graders, more than two-thirds
30 of 10th graders, and about two in every five ~~eight~~ *8th* graders
31 have consumed alcohol; and

32 WHEREAS, When youth drink, they tend to drink intensively,
33 often consuming four to five drinks at one time. Eleven percent
34 of ~~eight~~ *8th* graders, 22 percent of 10th graders, and 29 percent
35 of 12th graders report engaging in heavy ~~episodic, or binge,~~
36 *episodic or binge* drinking within the past two weeks; and

37 WHEREAS, Data from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse
38 and Alcoholism's 2001–02 National Epidemiologic Survey on
39 Alcohol and Related Conditions, a survey of 43,000 ~~U.S. United~~
40 *States* adults, showed that early alcohol use, independent of other

1 risk factors, may contribute to the risk of developing future alcohol
2 problems. Those who began drinking in their early teens were at
3 greater risk of developing alcohol dependence at some point in
4 their lives, and they were also at greater risk of developing
5 dependence more quickly and at younger ages. The findings were
6 reported in Volume 160 of the Archives of Pediatrics and
7 Adolescent Medicine from July 2006; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2007, the United States Surgeon General, in
9 collaboration with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and
10 Alcoholism and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
11 Administration, issued a call to action to combat teen alcohol
12 drinking. The call to action highlighted the need to “[e]ngage
13 parents, schools, communities, all levels of government, all social
14 systems that interface with youth, and youth themselves, in a
15 coordinated national effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking
16 and its consequences.” In addition, the call to action urged
17 policymakers to “[p]romote an understanding of underage alcohol
18 consumption in the context of human development and maturation
19 that takes into account individual adolescent characteristics as well
20 as environmental, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences”; and

21 WHEREAS, The accumulating evidence of alcohol’s adverse
22 effects on the developing brain is compelling. Given the prevalence
23 of drinking and binge drinking among adolescents, the prevention
24 and reduction of underage drinking must be a priority for the people
25 of the State of California; and

26 WHEREAS, Governors of 41 states have joined the Leadership
27 to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of governors,
28 governors’ spouses, federal agencies, and public and private
29 organizations working to prevent the use of alcohol by children 9
30 to 15 years of age. It is the only national effort that focuses on this
31 age group. The initiative is alerting the nation to the critical public
32 health problem of underage drinking, mobilizing stakeholders, and
33 promoting evidence-based public policy initiatives; now, therefore,
34 be it

35 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
36 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature urges the Governor to
37 make the prevention of underage alcohol use a priority of the state
38 by working with state law enforcement, education, and public
39 health leaders; engaging parents, schools, communities, and all
40 levels of government, all social systems that interface with youth,

1 and youth themselves in a statewide effort to prevent and reduce
2 underage drinking and its consequences; and ensuring that
3 California is active in the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol
4 Free; and be it further
5 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
6 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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